

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 038199

EXDIS-USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, XF, EEC
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SUBJECT:US AND EC PRESIDENCY DIALOGUE: MIDDLE EAST

1. DANISH AMBASSADOR OTTO R. BORCH CALLED ON ASSISTANT
SECRETARY ATHERTON FEB 10 FOR AN EC BRIEFING ON SADAT'S
VISIT TO THE US. QUESTIONS COVERED PURPOSE OF SADAT'S
VISIT, FUTURE ROLE OF US AND ANTICIPATED PROGRESS TOWARD
SETTLEMENT.

2. ATHERTON SAID US HAD BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT SADAT'S
THINKING ON EVOLUTION OF PEACE PROCESS. IT WAS NOT

CLEAR HE WAS WILLING TO CONTINUE. PRESIDENT CARTER INVITED HIM TO WASHINGTON TO DISCUSS MIDDLE EAST ISSUES IN DEPTH AND TO ARRIVE AT SOME KIND OF UNDERSTANDING ON PROCEDURE.

VISIT ALSO PRESENTED OPPORTUNITY TO BRIEF SADAT ON ISRAELI PERSPECTIVE. WE POINTED OUT THAT PRIME MINISTER BEGIN HAD ALREADY BEEN CRITICIZED IN ISRAEL FOR GIVING AWAY TOO MUCH TOO FAST TO SADAT. ISRAELI THINKING COULD NOT CHANGE RADICALLY OVERNIGHT EVEN IN RESPECT TO EVENTS AS IMPORTANT AS SADAT'S VISIT TO JERUSALEM. MAJOR RESULT OF SADAT'S VISIT WAS HIS REALIZATION THAT PERSISTENCE, KEY WORD OF PUBLIC STATEMENTS, IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY EVEN IF NEGOTIATIONS SEEM TEDIOUS AT TIMES.

3. NEXT STEP WOULD BE DAYAN'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON ON FEB 15, AHERTON CONTINUED. MAJOR SUBJECT OF DISCUSSIONS WILL BE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN SUBJECT OF EXTENSIVE NEGOTIATIONS. SADAT ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO DECLARATION AS MEANS TO INDUCE KING HUSSEIN AND PERHAPS MODERATE PALESTINIANS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. APART FROM THIS, SINAI SETTLEMENTS HAVE BECOME SERIOUS ISSUE FOR SADAT. AHERTON NOTED PAREN-
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THETICALLY THAT MAJOR DEBATE ON THIS SUBJECT UNDERWAY IN ISRAEL. BEGIN AND DAYAN SAY SINAI SETTLEMENTS ACT AS BUFFER TO EGYPTIAN DARTER POINTED AT ISRAEL'S HEART. FOR THE MOMENT, EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI MILITARY COMMITTEE WILL CONTINUE TO MEET PUTTING ASIDE SETTLEMENTS ISSUE TEMPORARILY. HOWEVER, SADAT HAS MADE CLEAR THERE CAN BE NO RECONVENING OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE UNTIL THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES IS AGREED UPON.

4. OF THE THREE AGENDA ITEMS: DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, WEST BANK AND GAZA GUIDELINES, AND ELEMENTS OF PEACE TREATIES, THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE IS THE MOST DIFFICULT, AHERTON SAID. FOCUSED ON PRINCIPLE RELATING TO WEST BANK AND GAZA, ISRAELI AND EGYPTIAN EXCHANGES REVEAL MAJOR CONCEPTUAL DIFFERENCES. ISRAEL IS STICKING TO BEGIN'S SELF-RULE PROPOSALS, REJECTING ANY ULTIMATE LOSS OF CONTROL OF TERRITORIES TO SOME ARAB ENTITY AFTER A TRANSITION PERIOD. EGYPT INSISTS ON EVENTUAL SELF-DETERMINATION INVOLVING PARTICIPATION OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. U.S. CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THAT PALESTINIANS SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN DETERMINATION OF THEIR OWN FUTURE. EGYPT, AHERTON NOTED, IS MOVING CLOSER TO THIS FORMULATION.

5. IN REPLY TO A QUESTION ABOUT HUSSEIN'S RELUCTANCE TO JOIN THE TALKS, AHERTON SAID HUSSEIN WANTS TO BE CERTAIN THAT ISRAEL WILL AGREE TO BASIC POLITICAL PRINCIPLES, PARTICULARLY TO ULTIMATE WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WEST BANK.

AT CLOSE OF MEETING BORCH READ TEXT OF CONFIDENTIAL EC
REPLY TO SADAT'S JAN 2 REQUEST FOR COMMUNITY'S POLITICAL
SUPPORT. ESSENTIALLY CONSERVATIVE IN TONE, LETTER SAID EC
FOLLOWING CLOSELY EVENTS RESULTING FROM SADAT'S "COURAGEOU
VISIT TO JERUSALEM.' IT EXPRESSES HOPE NEGOTIATING
PROCESS WILL CONTINUE AND IN DUE COURSE RESULT IN WIDER
PARTICIPATION LEADING TO COMPREHENSIVE PEACE SETTLEMENT IN
THE MIDDLE EAST. LETTER SAID EC WOULD CONTINUE TO PURSUE
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CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE ON BASIS OF ITS ME STATEMENTS OF JUNE
AND NOVEMBER 1977. ATHERTON SAID HE THOUGHT SADAT WOULD BE
PLEASED WITH LETTER, ESPECIALLY EMPHASIS ON COMPREHENSIVE
SETTLEMENT WHICH SHOULD HELP SHORE UP HIS CREDENTIALS WITH
OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES. VANCE

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